

9/11/2009 SPECIAL EDITION: This Week in Congress

This Week in Congress

September 11, 2009

Dear Friend,

Welcome to this special edition of "This Week in Congress." Today is a day we honor those who lost their lives during the tragic events of September 11, 2001. The firefighters, police and emergency personnel, airline passengers and civilians who perished in the terrorist acts of 9-11 will always be remembered. I wish we could regain the sense of national unity we experienced in the weeks that followed that tragic day. We remain grateful to the military men and women who continue to protect our country.

August District Work Time

Years ago, before air conditioning, Congress began a practice of leaving Washington, D.C., each August to escape the summer heat. Since then, the month of August has become a time for senators and representatives to work in their state and districts and to meet with folks back home. I am grateful for the opportunity August gives me to spend more time with Kansans and get my marching orders to take back to our nation's capital.

I travel thousands of miles throughout our state each year in an effort to stay in touch with the people I represent. During

this August work period, I traveled a bit over 10,000 miles. I spent most of my time conducting town halls and attending civic club meetings, Tea Parties, chamber of commerce events and county Farm Bureau annual meetings. I toured 10 hospital and medical centers in eight different communities, which gave me further insight into the way our health care delivery system works. I had the opportunity to visit 34 separate Kansas communities to speak with area residents about specific issues important to them. Overall, I participated in five agriculture events, four civic events and 15 other various public meetings.

During the August work period, I hosted 11 town hall meetings. To date, I have held 55 town hall meetings as part of my 2009 Annual Listening Tour, "From Washington to Home," that takes me to each of the 69 counties of the congressional district. Each meeting provided excellent feedback from Kansans. [Click here to view the listening tour schedule and the areas I have stopped this year.](#) [Click here to view photos from my town hall meetings.](#)

Since coming to Congress, I have kept a map in my Hays District office to help me keep track of all the communities I visit and events I attend each year. Each push pin represents a speech I have made, a town hall meeting I have held, a parade I have attended, a school I visited, hospital I toured or other visit I have made to a community in Kansas. You can now follow my travels across the state with an electronic version of this map in the "Kansas" section of my Web site. [Click here to view the map to see the places I visited during the August work period and throughout the year.](#)

I hope members of congress return to Washington, D.C., more knowledgeable about what we need to do to better serve those we represent.

Commenting on President Obama's Health Care Address

Wednesday night, President Obama delivered what the media described as a "make or break" speech on health care. I continue to strongly disagree with the President's proposal. Furthermore, I am skeptical when the president says reform

can be paid by reducing \$900 billion in Medicare and Medicaid fraud and abuse and the plan won't increase the deficit by one cent.

During my town hall meetings and other events across Kansas during the month of August, I visited with many Kansans about their health care concerns and listened to their perspectives. Kansans care greatly about this issue and I believe this is too important to force legislation through Congress just to get something passed to gain political headlines. The President expressed a desire to explore a wide range of options. We need to do just this and not be restricted by the current Democrat proposals.

The way we get meaningful reform will be by reducing health care costs. We lower costs through reforms that eliminate the unnecessary over-spending in our current system. We have a number of options to improve our health care instead of passing legislation that will likely cause millions of American to lose their current coverage and raise taxes by billions. The President mentioned that his door is "always open" for serious proposals. My door is open as well, Mr. President.

Throughout the health care debate, I have stressed that more Americans will gain access to quality health care once costs are controlled and reduced. I continue to advocate for ideas such as medical liability reform, an increased emphasis on wellness and disease prevention, providing tax incentives to low-income families to retain or purchase private health insurance, implementation of health information technology, and training more medical professionals and encouraging them to practice in underserved areas. I also support finding responsible ways to address the problems caused by pre-existing conditions and to increase the size of the pool of insured.

Very truly yours,

Jerry

